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**Statement to Planning Committee 29/06/2022**

**22/01299/FUL**

Frome House, Lower Bristol Road, Westmoreland, Bath, Bath And North East Somerset, BA2 1EY

Change of use of the existing building (excluding ground floor tyre repair centre) to 25 student bedspaces and associated works.

***Against***

**We maintain an in-principle objection to the speculative provision of Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) and the resulting impact on the residential character of the townscape.**

The site is located in an area of 25% HMO saturation. There is a high concentration of PBSA within the immediate setting of the proposed development, including Twerton Mill, Waterside Court, and Charlton Court, with an approximate provision of 915 bedspaces. Schemes at the Old Bakery and the Jubilee Centre have been permitted for an additional 183 bedspaces. **We therefore maintain that this development would contribute to the disproportionate quantity of student housing in this area.**

The case officer states that the provision of PBSA “would mean that students do not need to occupy further market housing, thereby preserving the existing housing stock”. There is **NO** evidence that the development of private student accommodation has returned existing HMOs to the family housing market, **OR** resulted in a significant reduction in applications for changes of use to HMO status. This similarly does not account for HMOs being a typically more affordable and attractive choice for students.

We are not opposed to the controlled provision of student accommodation where demand can be justified in partnership with an education provider. **However, we remain strongly opposed to speculative and opportunistic development that in many cases offers accommodation at a premium price point.**

A previous application was refused at Planning Committee in February 2022. Reasons for refusal included the **“overprovision of student housing resulting in an inappropriate housing mix in the locality”** contrary to policy CP10. We maintain that the development of PBSA would result in the oversaturation of student accommodation in this area, with insufficient justification of demand.

**We therefore call for this application to be refused on these grounds.**